

## Opening Remarks - II

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The perinatal HIV prevention initiative is based on congressional funding first appropriated in the fall of 1999. To maximize the impact of the initiative, funding was awarded to states with high HIV seroprevalence among childbearing women and to states with high numbers of perinatal AIDS cases.

Cornerstones of the initiative include development of strategies to improve outreach to high-risk women, to increase antenatal voluntary counseling and testing, and to increase participation in perinatal HIV interventions. The initiative challenges us to use these funds to improve links among HIV prevention, antenatal, drug abuse, and Maternal Child Health services and, in so doing, to provide optimal care for HIV-infected women and their infants.

There has been dramatic progress in reducing perinatal HIV transmission in the U.S. over the past 7 years. However gaps still remain, particularly for those women not accessing antenatal care services.

There are a number of crucial partners working with CDC and the states in these perinatal HIV prevention efforts. These include our PHS partners at NIH including NICHD, NIAID, NIDA, as well as our partners at SAMSHA and HRSA. In addition, the ongoing work by NASTAD in supporting HIV prevention and care has been crucial to the successes so far, as has that of national health care organizations in developing educational materials and training.

Medicaid funding has and will continue to be important at the state level in financing the health care costs of perinatal HIV prevention, care and treatment for HIV-infected women, children and youth. The role of national health care provider organizations in training health care providers on prevention of perinatal HIV prevention has also been critical to the successes and progress to date.

The next several days will provide a forum and opportunity to hear about the varied and exciting programs that have been developed by the states and national health care provider organizations to help reduce perinatal HIV transmission to the lowest levels possible in the U.S., and to share lessons learned and materials. Thank you for all your hard work over the past year. We look forward to learning about your progress during this meeting and about how we can further assist you.